

punto de vista, se ha considerado que el conocimiento científico *progres*a y *corri*ge los errores cometidos al comienzo del uso de un producto, una técnica, una forma de trabajo, etc. Frente a esta interpretación, el constructivismo destaca que la *percepción* del riesgo está determinada por una serie de factores sociales, culturales, psicológicos, etc. El autor defiende convincentemente que la primera interpretación del riesgo es insuficiente y que la segunda es necesaria. El capítulo concluye con un repaso de los nuevos trabajos sobre el riesgo realizados desde la antropología, la historia oral, la sociología, etc. (cabría añadir aquí, seguramente, la aportación de la psicología evolutiva y la neurociencia).

En el último capítulo (11), Catherine Omnès resume la abundante investigación sobre la salud laboral en Francia desde el final del Antiguo Régimen hasta la actualidad. La autora, para varios periodos, compara el caso de Francia con el de otros países y analiza la participación de diferentes grupos sociales. Algunas reflexiones finales sobre empresarios, sindicatos y trabajadores no están, creo yo, a la altura de la profundidad del resto del capítulo, al no tener en cuenta las aportaciones que, para varios países, han analizado el papel representado por estos tres grupos.

Es difícil que un libro escrito por tantos autores, que provienen de disciplinas científicas con objetivos y lenguajes diferentes, en el que se tratan tantos temas y en el que los capítulos reflejan investigaciones más o menos novedosas, o enlazadas con la literatura internacional no resulte desigual. En cualquier caso, este libro es una gran aportación a la investigación sobre la salud laboral a lo largo de la historia. Estoy de acuerdo con el editor en que en el libro se aportan nuevos puntos de vista que, seguramente, marcaran una gran parte de la futura investigación sobre el tema. ■

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Christopher Sellers and Joseph Melling, eds. *Dangerous Trade: Histories of Industrial Hazard across a Globalising World*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press; 2012, 218 p. ISBN: 978-1-4399-0469-5. \$ 29,95.

In the world today many millions of people are severely disabled and die as a result of injuries and chronic diseases associated directly with their work or indirectly as

a consequence of environmental exposures linked to industry and their products. As the editors of this outstanding collection remind us, industry-related deaths globally today are higher than both malaria and tuberculosis (p. 2), and growing. To understand this, the editors persuasively argue, we need to study how this came about (history) as well as locating this within a transnational framework because of the flow of hazards and risks both within and across national boundaries from the developed to the developing world over the past century. This well edited and stimulating collection of essays is a really welcome addition to the growing field of occupational and environmental health history. It adds substantially to the literature because it provides a comparative, international and historical perspective on industrial hazards, with case studies ranging widely in approach and subject-matter, from occupational diseases to wider environmental impacts across many corners of the globe. Moreover, in developing the concept of «industrial hazard regimes» the editors and contributors provide a useful analytical tool for the subject area which is sure to generate further fruitful discussion and debate.

The empirical work on display is diverse and extremely impressive. One of the strengths of this collection is that it is genuinely interdisciplinary, bringing together specialists from history, sociology of science, geography, environmental studies, politics and anthropology. This makes it an engaging and thought-provoking read. The quality of the 13 «case study» chapters is consistently high and full of revealing insights, whilst the volume is nicely topped and tailed with a very reflective and crisply argued editors' introduction and conclusion (the latter written with the long-serving activist Barry Castleman). The book is structured chronologically around two phases of globalisation. The first section, comprising five chapters, focusses on the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. There are chapters on the occupational health experience of Malayan rubber plantation workers (Amarkit Kaur); Mexican oil workers (Myrna Santiago); mercury poisoning in the Almaden mines in Spain (Alfredo Menendez-Navarro); anthrax in Britain (Tim Carter and Joe Melling) and chemical poisoning in multi-national rayon manufacture in the UK (Paul Blanc). The case studies in this section thus criss-cross the developed and the developing world, reminding us of the capabilities of capitalism to exploit not just within their national boundaries, but beyond as part of imperialist expansion and multi-national company profit-seeking in search of cheap raw materials and markets. Bodies bore the brunt of autocratic employer policies and productionist work cultures in this period of limited regulation, virtually sacrosanct managerial prerogative, entrenched anti-trade unionism and conspiracies of silence within industry-dominated scientific and medical communities.

What is evident from these first section essays is that this was a deeply contested terrain. There were dissident voices amongst professionals such as Alice Hamilton in the USA, and there was some agency and organisation amongst workers, trade unionists and victims groups, but the stories here suggest they invariably had only a limited impact in controlling industrial hazards globally up to Second World War. Different configurations of countervailing forces provided some protection for workers within national boundaries and particular locales—especially in places like GB and some US states—but in practice regulatory regimes were dominated by scientism, bureaucracy, by a tendency to try to limit toxins and poisons, rather than banning them, and by significant time-lags between discovery and effective regulation, and between the fledgling statutory frameworks and actual workplace practice, where regulations were widely flouted and ignored.

Menéndez-Navarro's study of mercury poisoning in the Almaden mines in Spain will perhaps be of particular interests to *Dynamis* readers. This chapter is one of the highlights of this excellent collection. In a sophisticated and nuanced analysis Menéndez-Navarro unpicks how eroding international competitiveness and mine modernisation in the early twentieth century led to heightened tensions over the impact of mercury poisoning on the body and a reconfiguration of the balance of power, with paternalist (or «conservationist») management being replaced by a more technocratic bureaucracy with a heightened role for medical expertise and health surveillance. As with coal and metal mining in the UK in the same period, this became a contested terrain, with capital and labour marshalling scientific and medical expertise to support their respective claims about workplace hazards and health impacts. The new emphasis on laboratory sciences from the 1900s to the 1920s, Menendez-Navarro persuasively argues, played a role in containing labour conflict and «allowed managers to regain control over workforce management» (p. 57).

Section two focusses on the second half of the twentieth century and comprises eight chapters. Anna Zalik explores the varying capacities of campaigning groups in opposing liquefied natural gas terminals, focussing on the siting of a terminal in Mexico in 2006 where the labour movement was relatively weak. Her essay illuminates the ways certain bodies were exposed to higher levels of risk and «how regional and social inequality influence potential opposition to facility installation» (p. 88). Daniel Renfrew's study of lead poisoning in contemporary Uruguay centres on the re-emergence of this old hazard in different forms and the potential of what he terms «innovative alliances» (p. 109) of lay and professional activists in campaigning for protection and justice. Melling

and Sellers investigate the increasingly transnational nature of knowledge generation on occupational health, examining international conferences on silicosis and asbestos between 1930 and 1978, and the pivotal role of Irvine Selikoff. In the process, these growing international networks shifted the focus of attention from workplace exposures to wider issues of environmental health. Stefania Barca's chapter, «Stories of Labor Environmentalism in Italy, 1968-1998», investigates the alliances between workers' movements and sympathetic scientific and medical experts —«militant science»— from which emerged more effective campaigning and new «embodied knowledge» about hazards and exposures which challenged orthodox opinion and led directly to important reforms in the Italian health, regulatory and compensation systems. Barca reminds us that workers were not just victims in this story but active agents, constituting what she calls «a powerful lever of environmental consciousness and action» (p. 137).

In chapter 10, Emmanuel Henry discusses the shifting focus in public discourse in France from occupational to environmental risks in the case of asbestos over the period 1970-1995, arguing that the issue was only taken seriously in the 1990s when the wider environmental risks were increasingly recognised and the issue redefined as a public «scandal». Henry raises the important issue of how effective mobilisation against risks to health has become more difficult in recent years in a context of neo-liberal ideologies and the deteriorating capacities of organised labour. Barbara Allen's contribution critically examines the stories of two recent lawsuits —one successful (Italy) and one failed (USA)— against chemical multinationals for damages for poisoning. In a piece that really exemplifies the power of the comparative approach, Allen shows how different circumstances and socio-political alignments led to widely different outcomes. In the US case the environmentalist campaign was narrowly focused on traditional science whereas in Italy what Allen refers to as a diverse «winning coalition» emerged of «activists, unions, scientists, citizen groups, government agencies, and other participants» (p. 165). Susanna Bohme provides an insightful study of the use of pesticides in the USA and in Central America, tracing the connections to sterility in production workers and the shifting of production from the USA to countries like Nicaragua as the risks became evident and regulation intensified. Her analysis focuses upon Dole's operations in Nicaragua; on what she calls «different regimes of protection for U.S. workers compared to non-U.S. workers» (p. 168) and on how workers mobilised at the nation-state level to force change. The final chapter by Barry Castleman and Geoffrey Tweedale investigates the international proliferation of asbestos victims'

campaigning groups and coordinating agencies since the 1960s. These are located within the context of accelerating asbestos-related cancer death rates, differing socio-political and legal environments in different countries and varying levels of difficulty and injustice in prevailing national compensation systems. By 2010, 52 countries had banned asbestos and Castleman and Tweeddale persuasively argue for the «important contribution» of victims' action groups to this process of containing asbestos use and exposure globally (pp. 191-2).

Whilst the breadth of coverage in this collection is impressive, inevitably, perhaps, there are some gaps in coverage. That is only to be expected. It would have been useful, for example, to have had case studies that touched on experience in the African continent, in Russia and in China. The evolution of the «industrial hazard regime» in China would reveal much of interest about a rapidly industrialising country with a communist government embracing the market, where many Western multi-nationals have outsourced risk and where rates of occupational disease, disability and mortality are astronomically high and rising (see T. Wright, *The Political Economy of the Chinese Coal Industry: Black Gold and Blood Stained Coal*, 2011). There is also potential, perhaps, to synthesise cultural approaches more into the «industrial hazards regime» model. Whilst there is much reflective commentary here by essayists on the dynamics of occupational health and environmental activism, alliances between «experts» and grassroots movements and victims' agency, what this reviewer found surprising is the virtual omission of workers and activists own *voices* in the case studies in *Dangerous Trade*. Talking directly to the surviving participants in such struggles (experts, activists and workers) and bringing these narratives in to play would reveal insights into motivations, work-health cultures, capacities to mobilise, emotions and how impacts of disability upon identities could radicalise and energise campaigns. Daniel James evocative *Dona Maria's Story* (2001) provides an example of the potential here and this is something my colleague (Ronald Johnston) and I have tried to do in relation to studies of asbestos in Scotland and «black lung» in the UK.

This is sure to be a well-thumbed text, widely used by academic researchers and health and environment activists (amongst others). It succeeds admirably in emphasising and in turn problematizing the transnational nature of hazards and elucidating global shifts in toxic exposures, as well as sharpening awareness of the complex interactions between industry and the body. It will undoubtedly generate further debate and discussion on the nature of «industrial hazard regimes», including the culpability of key players such as capital and the state in the still growing death and disability toll exacted by industry upon workers, the

residents who live in the environs of polluting industry and the end users of toxic products globally. Almost in equal measure, the essayists highlight the dynamic and complex reactions of workers and neighbourhoods —those directly affected by toxic agents and dangers— delineating how activist groups and/or their professional «expert» supporters challenged industry, lobbied politicians and legislatures, asserting their agency in mediating and shaping policy and forcing change. The book is bursting with insightful and thought-provoking case studies, within which I particularly liked the consistent cross-referencing by essayists and direct engagement with each others findings. The editors have done an exemplary job of drawing out specificities and commonalities, patterns and themes, as well as raising a plethora of research questions for the future. *Dangerous Trade* sets a new standard in studies of occupational and environmental hazards. Hopefully it will succeed in fulfilling a primary aim of the editors and essayists: «to puncture the complacency that prevails in much of the world today concerning industrial dangers» (p. 195). ■

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